

#### EXISTING PARK FEATURES AND FACILITIES

- *Approximately 130 individual camp sites, with electrical hook-ups and nearby shower facilities*
- *Nature Trails*
- *Picnic Shelters and pavilions*
- *4 Tennis Courts*
- *2 basketball mini-courts*
- *Sledding Hill*
- *2 Baseball Diamond*
- *Fishing access*
- *4 Restroom Facilities*
- *Playgrounds*
- *Office*
- *Maintenance and storage garages, bulldozer building, and lumber shed*
- *Superintendent's residence and barn*
- *3 ponds*
- *Memorial site*

## 4.4 SPRAGUE BROOK PARK

### DESCRIPTION

Sprague Brook Park is one of the largest of the developed, multi-purpose County Parks at 974-acres, and is the only facility in the park system offering overnight camping. The park is located in the rural, well-forested towns of Concord and Sardinia in southeast Erie County, just off of Route 240 on Foote Road. Functionally, Sprague Brook Park centers around 130 Campsites in three large camping areas. Additional recreational amenities are meant to enhance the camper's use and experience of the park and allow for large group picnics and outings. While some "active" recreation is offered, emphasis is on passive recreation throughout the park's vast open spaces and woodlands.

Sprague Brook is a park of hidden natural treasures, from flora and fauna to incredible natural scenery along the Brook, in the woodlands, atop the hillsides, etc. One of the most impressive sites is the views to the opposite distant hillside of Kissing Bridge Ski area. The terrain is gently sloping throughout, with some severe topography in the park's northeast section. Three ponds add to the park's beauty and usefulness for park users and wildlife enhancement. Numerous trails traverse the forested areas, and the park is also a popular destination for winter activities, such as sledding and cross-country skiing.

### PARK AND AREA HISTORY

Sprague Brook Park was acquired by Erie County in 1963 by using state and federal aid programs to assume title to more than 2,200 acres of parkland (including Eighteen Mile Creek, Beeman's Creek, Larkin Woods). In 1964, Erie County bought 86-acres of land for expansion in the Town of Sardinia and Concord for \$1,500.00

### LOCAL CONTEXT

Sprague Brook Park is approximately 28 miles southeast of the City of Buffalo, and is located off the main Route 240 traveling south from Orchard Park and West Falls. The Park is on the opposite hill from Kissing Bridge Ski Area, one of the region's popular winter destinations for families.

### RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the earliest days of the Akron Falls Park development, the area around Akron and Newstead has seen and continues to see significant growth. While in its earlier days, Akron Falls Park served the recreational needs of nearly all area residents. Now, with more recent developments of other local park and recreation facilities, there is less demand on Akron Falls Park for certain types of active recreation, while more and more people have rediscovered the park for its natural beauty and “heritage” features.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- *Too much of the park’s open space is regularly mowed. This detracts from the park’s overall theme of nature and wildlife.*
- *The maintenance facilities should be better screened from the public use areas*

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Begin a “re-naturalization” initiative in the park to phase out current practices of regularly mowing large expanses of lawn. Transition the little-used lawn expanses to natural meadows; some areas mowed down once at the end of each season, and others never mowed again.*
- *Consider an expansion to the existing popular camping facilities, mainly adding more sites to the northernmost campground.*
- *Promote winter use through expansion of cross-country ski trails, sledding, winter camping; Potential exists to widen the current sledding hill for additional capacity at peak snow times.*
- *Upgrade existing park facilities; renovate and potentially expand existing cross-country ski warming hut.*
- *Establish overlook areas in the park to highlight the impressive vistas to the surrounding hillsides, Kissing Bridge Ski Area, etc.*
- *Promote the use of Sprague Brook Park for important seasonal events, including the hugely popular Autumnfest. Consider upgrading existing facilities to accommodate a future expansion of this events and the addition of other events.*
- *Review and evaluate the numerous “unmarked” existing*

PARKS WITH UNIQUE FEATURES (WITHIN A 5-MILE RADIUS)

Town of Concord:

- **Klissing Bridge Ski Resort**  
*A private ski resort open to the public providing year-round activities, including golf, downhill skiing and snowboarding*

Town of Sardinia:

- **Chaffee Sardinia Town Park, 31 acres**  
*A major town park with numerous sports fields, including tennis, volleyball, basketball, baseball and horseshoe pits*
- **Manion Park, 13 acres**  
*A medium sized town park with additional sports fields, including soccer, basketball, baseball and horseshoe pits*

Town of Colden:

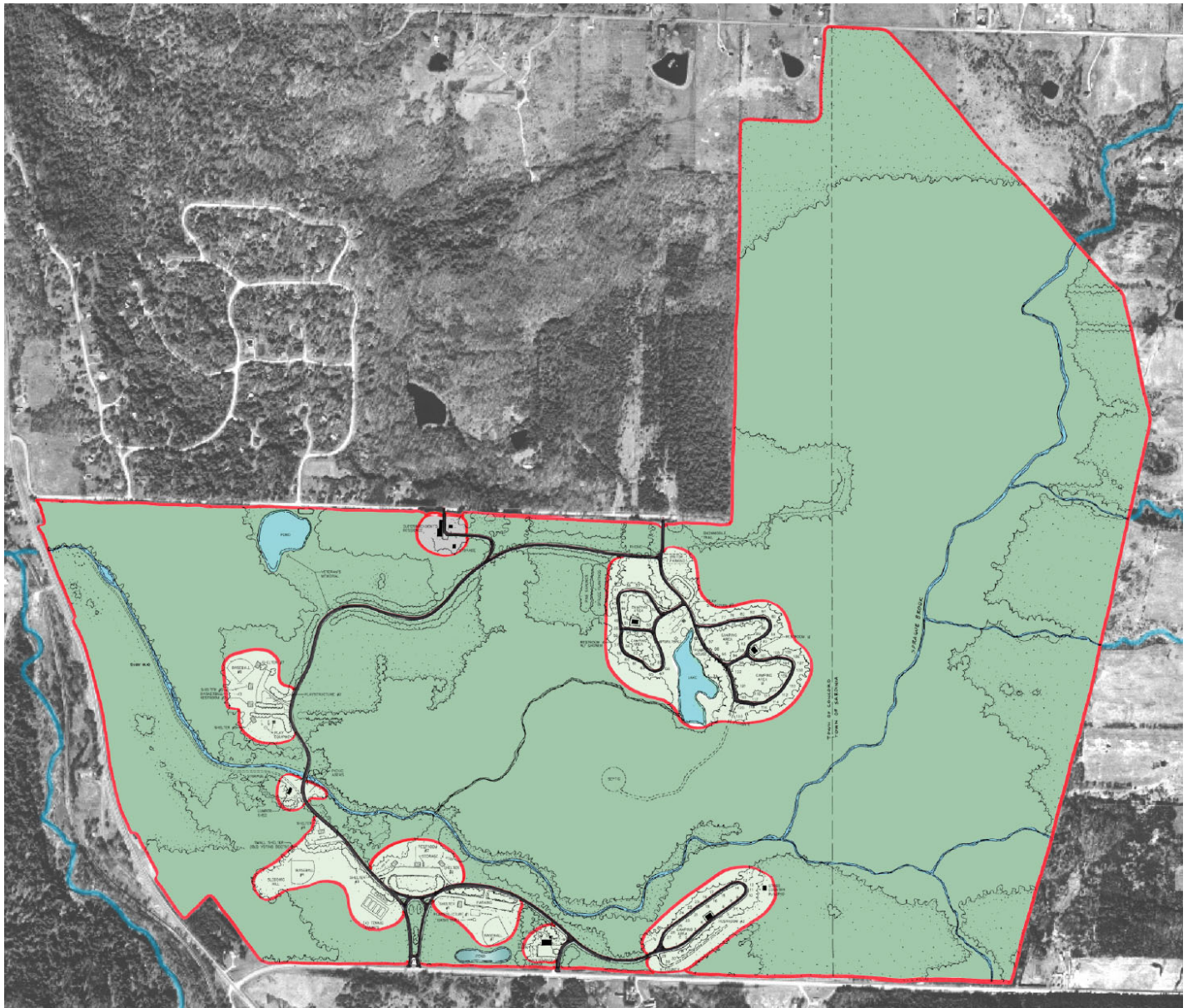
- **Ski Tamarack**  
*A private ski resort open to the public during the winter providing winter activities, including downhill skiing and snowboarding*

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*trails for appropriate route alignments and proper signage/blazes; Trail “loops” are preferred.*

- Consider a more formalized (“structured”) trail network to include Mountain Biking in a safe and regulated manner. A trails design expert would handle the decision between segregated or Multi-use trails for various user types in a subsequent review. This, along with the use of some Forestry lots and other undeveloped park properties, would take some of the pressure off Hunters Creek Park as one of the most popular hiking and biking sites in the region.*
- Establish a better signage program throughout the park, including entrance signs, wayfinding signage, interpretive signs (natural systems, park features, flora and fauna, etc.), camp site demarcation, trail signage, etc.*
- Reevaluate the purpose of the existing dirt road that parallels the creek on west side of park. Current use is a maintenance road/dumping ground, however should be considered for future creekside nature trail, with linkages to Kissing Bridge. Remove materials storage from edge of creek.*
- Provide creek bank stabilization / erosion control in area in back of main parking lot.*
- Consider introducing an outdoor grass amphitheater in “natural bowl” in back of main parking area. This site could offer outdoor concerts or theater, and could accommodate educational lectures focused on environmental issues and opportunities in the park.*
- Improve and enhance main entrance to park. Provide enhanced landscape treatments and signage. Utilize the secondary entrance near the service area for service vehicles only.*





## Legend

- Nature Reserve Zone
- Recreation Zone
- Heritage Zone
- Service Zone
- Zone Boundary

### Nature Reserve Zones

Includes significant natural features or areas that require management to ensure the long-term protection of the natural heritage, i.e. woodlands, wetlands, natural open space areas (meadows), waterways, ravines, gorges and escarpment faces, steep slopes, etc.

### Recreation Zones (Active and Passive)

Includes the 'maintained' landscape areas of the parks in which facilities development is permitted to support low to moderate intensity recreation activities, i.e. sports fields, specialized activities, picnic areas, campgrounds, parking lots, etc.

### Heritage Zones

Includes areas of significant cultural heritage or archaeological features that require management to ensure the preservation of these important heritage assets.

### Service Zones

Includes maintenance and service areas for the developed parks, as well as access points or staging areas within the Conservation Parks (e.g. trailheads and parking lots) where minimal use facilities are needed to support allowable uses within the Nature Reserve Zone.

## Sprague Brook Park MANAGEMENT ZONES

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# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES / PARK SPECIFIC ACTIONS

## PRIORITY KEY

- S Short Term *(1 - 3 years)*
- M Mid Term *(4 - 10 years)*
- L Long Term *(11 - 20+ years)*
- O Ongoing *(Continuing Efforts each year)*